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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

FOL RPT BUENOS AIRES 00269 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ASUNCION
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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0269

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: MRS. PERON RESHUFFLES CABINET

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 8414, B) BUENOS AIRES 0221, C) SMITH-APU
TELECON

1. IN MOVE WHICH HAD BEEN RUMORED FOR SOME TIME, MRS. PERON
THIS MORNING REORGANIZED HER CABINET. SHE ASKED FOR RESIGNA-
TION OF ALL MINISTERS AND WHEN THEY WERE TENDERED, ACCEPTED
FOUR. ROBLEDO, ARAUZ CASTEX, VOTTERO AND CORVALAN NANCLARES
WERE BOUNCED AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE,
AND JUSTICE, RESPECTIVELY. CAFIERO, RUCKHAUF, ARRIGHI AND
DEMARCO WERE CONFIRMED AS MINISTERS OF ECONOMY, LABOR, EDUCA-
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TION, AND SOCIAL WELFARE, RESPECTIVELY. ROBERTO ARES, CURRENT-

LY PRESIDENT OF BANCO DE LA NACION, WAS APPOINTED AS NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR. JOSE ALBERTO DEHEZA REPLACED CORVALAN NANCLARES AS JUSTICE MINISTER. FOR THE MOMENT, ARRIGHI WILL ACT AS FOREIGN MINISTER AS WELL AS CARRYING EDUCATION PORTFOLIO AND DEHEZA WILL ACT AS INTERIM DEFENSE MINISTER.

2. COMMENT: CHANGES SIGNIFY A CLEANING OUT OF ROBLEDO AND ALLIES. VOTTERO, ARAUZ CASTEX AND CORVALAN NANCLARES WERE ALL CLOSE TO HIM AND SHARED HIS POINT OF VIEW. (ALL WERE ALSO OLD FRIENDS OF SENATOR LUDER.) ROBLEDO'S POLITICAL DEMISE DOES NOT NECESSARILY INDICATE PROPORTIONAL INCREASE IN POWER OF LORENZO MIGUEL. ROBERTO ARES IS MODERATE OF GOMEZ MORALES SCHOOL NOT KNOWN TO BE CLOSE TO LORENZO MIGUEL OR LABOR LEADERS GENERALLY. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOT PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE SINCE 1971 (WHEN HE RESIGNED FROM PERONIST COUNCIL IN PROTEST OF CAMPORA'S APPOINTMENT TO REPLACE PALADINO, TO WHOM ARES WAS VERY CLOSE). HENCE, IT NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR WHERE HE STANDS NOW IN RELATION TO VARIOUS SPLITS WITHIN PERONIST MOVEMENT.

3. WHETHER OR NOT CHANGES SIGNIFY STRENGTHENING OF LORENZO MIGUEL-JULIO GONZALEZ LINE, THEY OBVIOUSLY REFLECT DEFEAT FOR ROBLEDO AND HIS. ONE WOULD NOW EXPECT MUCH BALLYHOOED "NATIONAL PROJECT," FOR EXAMPLE, TO BE PRETTY MUCH SHELVED. PROJECT ITSELF MAY HAVE BEEN SHAM ANYWAY (THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN IT SAY IT WAS LITTLE MORE THAN RECOMPILATION OF PERON'S LAST SPEECHES), BUT ROBLEDO'S PURPOSE IN RAISING IT WAS CLEAR AND SERIOUS, I.E., TO GET BACK TO DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS POLITICS THAT CHARACTERIZED POLITICAL SCENE PRIOR TO PERON'S DEATH. LORENZO MIGUEL, JULIO GONZALEZ AND THOSE OF THEIR ILK, HOWEVER, LOCKED IN COMBAT WITH CALABRO AND ANTIVERTICALISTAS, ARE NOT AT ALL INTERESTED IN DIALOGUE; ON CONTRARY, THEY WERE AND ARE PUSHING FOR INTERVENTION OF BA AND SANTA FE PROVINCES AND EXPULSION OF ANTIVERTICALISTAS FROM MOVEMENT (SEE REF A).

4. NONETHELESS, FACT THAT ROBLEDO HAS BEEN OUSTED DOES NOT NECESSARILY INDICATE IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT DEFENESTRATION OF ROBLEDO IS HALF-LOAF. MRS. PERON IS GIVING LORENZO MIGUEL FOR MOMENT IN LIEU OF INTERVENTION, WHICH SHE REALIZES WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS MOVE RIGHT NOW (SEE REF B).

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5. TO LEAVE FOREIGN MINISTRY UNCOVERED AT MOMENT WHEN GOA IS IN SOMETHING OF A CONFRONTATION WITH LONDON AND HAS OTHER CRITICAL FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS IS STRANGE INDEED. ARGENTINA'S FOREIGN POLICY POSTURE WILL PROBABLY THUS SUFFER EVEN FURTHER DETERIORATION.

6. EQUALLY SURPRISING IS FACT THAT DEFENSE MINISTER'S JOB

HAS BEEN LEFT UNFILLED--EVEN IF ONLY FOR A FEW DAYS. PERHAPS
GOA COULD FIND NO ONE WHO WISHED TO PLACE HIMSELF BETWEEN
ARMED FORCES AND GOVERNMENT AT THIS PARTICULAR JUNCTURE.

7. MRS. PERON'S PURPOSE IN RESHUFFLING CABINET IS DOUBTLESS
TO STRENGTHEN HER OWN POSITION--ESPECIALLY VIS-A-VIS LUDER--AND
TO SIGNAL THAT SHE IS GOING ON OFFENSIVE. WHETHER OR NOT IT
WILL HAVE THAT EFFECT, HOWEVER, REMAINS VERY MUCH TO BE SEEN.
MILITARY HAVE YET TO BE HEARD FROM. THEY MAY NOT BE OUTRAGED
BY CHANGES, BUT THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE PLEASED EITHER. IN
THIS SENSE, MUCH WILL DEPEND UPON WHO IS EVENTUALLY APPOINTED
TO FILL DEFENSE PORTFOLIO.

8. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, ROBLEDO'S FAILURE WAS PROBABLY
INEVITABLE. HE WAS TRYING TO RESTORE SEMBLANCE OF UNITY TO
A MOVEMENT (AND A SITUATION) WHICH MAY HAVE ALREADY PASSED
CRITICAL POINT OF FRAGMENTATION. FURTHER, HE WAS TRYING TO
DO SO WITH AN ADMINISTRATION IN WHICH FEW ANY LONGER HAVE
CONFIDENCE. HE WAS, FINALLY, TRYING TO SAVE MRS. PERON FROM
HERSELF. IT WAS MORE THAN HE WAS UP TO.

9. CABINET CHANGES WOULD SEEM TO SUGGEST NO BASIC CHANGES
WITH RESPECT TO ARGENTINA'S POSTURE VIS-A-VIS US
INTERESTS. CAFIERO REMAINS IN PLACE AND ARES IS MODERATE
WHO IS WELL DISPOSED TO US.
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